

# **Connecting the Dots: Wildfire, Forest Health, and Sustainable Rural Economies**

**Notes from the Webposium Bishop Regional Discussion  
October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2009**

**Hosted by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy**

## **BISHOP**

### ***Attendees:***

- Greg Cook – GC Forest Products, Mammoth Lakes
- Dale Johnson – US Forest Service/BLM
- Larry Johnston – Mono County Planning Department
- Scott Kusumoto – US Forest Service
- Michael Sprague – Mammoth/June Mountain Ski Area
- Yvonne Wood– UC Cooperative Extension

### ***1. From the morning panel discussions, what resonated for you?***

- The discussion exceeded my expectations. It was well focused and highlighted challenges and opportunities well.
- The issue is more complicated than many imagine. More basic information (cap and trade, carbon sequestration; laws; specific federal law which was cited) would be helpful.
- Soil was not discussed- there is a need soil impact assessments to get the broader picture.
- It was inspiring.

### ***2. What is your vision of success?***

- Community scaled projects (school, hospital district, ski area, large scale commercial building).
- Raw materials coming off public and private land and utilized by small businesses.

### ***3. What is our “starting point for action”?***

- Implementing a pilot project or demonstration project
- Developing a project in Mono County first
- Gathering more information to determine the scale of a pilot operation (e.g. Arizona’s project), what permits are needed and which agencies to work with.

### ***4. What are the barriers or hurdles to overcome?***

- Funding
- Public awareness
- Lack of information and knowledge
- Pricing and contracts
- Air quality issues
- Transportation costs
- Infrastructure
- Leadership

### ***5. What level of planning needs to go into these goal/activities?***

- Market analysis
- Resource assessment
- Additional NEPA analysis and planning
- Assistance developing business plan

**6. What projects are going on currently or in the past? What are the reasons for success or failure of a biomass facility nearby? What is the potential for establishment of a new local biomass or wood products facility?** There is no biomass facility nearby. A previous stewardship contract failed due to the lack of a business plan and organization. Experience and diversification will be keys to future success. A geothermal plant was suggested as a possible opportunity for a retrofit for cogeneration although no one was interested two years ago. Current forest products businesses are eager to further diversify operations. Mammoth Mountain ski resort is exploring a private/public partnership for a triple bottom line (environmental, social, and economic) project.

**7. Who here today can contribute to developing local collaboration?** All participants said they were eager to develop a local collaboration

**8. Who is missing from today's discussion?**

1. Elected officials
2. Contractors
3. Schools
4. Architects
5. Environmentalists
6. Sierra Business Council(SBC)
7. SCE/LA Department of Water and Power
8. Fire Safe Councils
9. Great Basin Air Pollution District

**9. What are the next steps?**

- Review all sub-regions notes
- Set up a meeting with Supervisor Hunt (who registered but did not attend), Rusty Gregory, USFS – participants hope the Sierra Nevada Conservancy to facilitate this meeting
- Identify mentors, experts and sites to visit with suggestions by SNC & SBC suggested
- Persevere

**Miscellaneous Issues:**

- Low impact harvesting is better option than using “heavy” equipment in order to protect soils
- Fuels treatment on the steep escarpment in Inyo County may be removing too much vegetation leaving areas prone to flooding
- More attention is needed to forest shrub -land interface in Inyo County

**Unanswered questions:**

- Is there a “one stop shop” to get all questions relevant to biomass answered?
- Would the “Fuels for School” program work locally? Perhaps someone could make a presentation about the program to the larger group/SBC?